

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 15, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

As members of the Safe Climate Caucus, we are writing to ask you to schedule a debate on the House floor on the science of climate change and the nation's response to this growing threat.

We have a moral obligation to protect the planet for future generations. In the past few weeks, searing heat and deadly wildfires have scorched the West, reminding us again of what is at stake. History will not judge the House of Representatives kindly if we continue to ignore the mounting danger.

On June 25, 2013, President Obama announced his plan to confront the challenge of climate change. His plan is a commonsense set of actions that will cut carbon emissions to avoid the worst consequences, prepare the nation for climate change that cannot be avoided, and lead international efforts to address climate change. In announcing his plan, the President said:

[S]cience, accumulated and reviewed over decades, tells us that our planet is changing in ways that will have profound impacts on all of humankind. ... So the question is not whether we need to act. The overwhelming judgment of science -- of chemistry and physics and millions of measurements -- has put all that to rest. Ninety-seven percent of scientists, including, by the way, some who originally disputed the data, have now put that to rest. They've acknowledged the planet is warming and human activity is contributing to it. ... So the question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it's too late. And how we answer will have a profound impact on the world that we leave behind not just to you, but to your children and to your grandchildren.¹

According to press reports, however, the Republican strategy is to avoid discussing the scientific basis for urgent action on climate change. On June 26, *Politico* reported, "Republican

¹ The White House, *Remarks by the President on Climate Change* (June 25, 2013) (online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/25/remarks-president-climate-change>).

leaders have a clear strategy for combating President Barack Obama's climate agenda: Don't talk about the science."²

The Republican strategy amounts to a conspiracy of silence. It jeopardizes the future of our children and of future generations by recklessly ignoring what scientists tell us is one of the most pressing challenges we face.

And it illustrates why we formed the Safe Climate Caucus. The Safe Climate Caucus is comprised of 25 members of the House who have made a commitment to talk every single day on the House floor that we are in session about the urgent need to address climate change. Every day, we have given speeches on topics relating to climate change, including the importance of preparing communities to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events, the potential for clean energy technologies, and the threats of rising temperatures across the country.

But despite our continued and ongoing efforts to speak out on this issue on the House floor, no Republican member of the House has shown up to explain why House Republicans refuse to accept the views of every scientific institution or to justify their inaction to future generations. In fact, when we challenged Chairman Upton, Subcommittee Chairman Whitfield, and the Republican members of the Energy and Commerce Committee to a debate on the House floor about climate change, they did not even respond to our challenge.³

In the last Congress, the Republican-led House voted 53 times to block any action on climate change. Republican members voted to defund research, to block action by the EPA to control pollution, to prevent energy efficiency measures from going into effect, and to stop the Administration from encouraging developing countries to do their part. They even voted to deny that climate change is occurring. This year, the Republican members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is the committee with principal jurisdiction over the nation's energy policy, voted against holding hearings with scientists who could explain the role of climate change in causing extreme weather, drought, heat waves, and wildfires.

The American people expect their elected leaders to debate the pressing issues facing our nation. As the nation's leading scientists have told us, climate change is one of the most serious threats we and future generations will confront. We therefore ask you and your Republican colleagues to debate us on the House floor about the dangers of climate change and the appropriate policy response.

² *GOP climate tack: Talk jobs, not science*, Politico (June 26, 2013).

³ Safe Climate Caucus, *Rep. Waxman and the Safe Climate Caucus Challenge Republicans to Debate on Climate Change* (Apr. 10, 2013) (press release) (online at <http://waxman.house.gov/rep-waxman-and-safe-climate-caucus-challenge-republicans-debate-climate-change>).

Sincerely,

Henry G. Wayne

Chi Van Kallen

Joel Hiffman

Ruth Hatt

Pats McFarlan

Babara Lee

John J. McFarlan

Ben R. Lujan

Bong J. Kim

Doris O. Matsui

Lal Blumman

Rail M. Lujabon

Jan Moore

Arthur Lee

Donna F. Edwards

Peter Welch

Luis Capps

Capt. B. Maly

Hank Jensen

Paul Stoner

Kith Elson

Adam Bluff